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PARTNERING 4 STUDENTS UNVEILED

Helping children placed outside their homes is the focus of a new website:

www.Partnering4students.org

The web-based tool kit was built through a widespread, collaborative initiative with one goal: Better ensure students placed outside their homes receive the best possible education to improve their future career opportunities.

State agencies and groups that work with children and youth in out-of-home placements joined forces to build an easier system for individuals working with at-risk students to find the information and resources they need.

www.Partnering4students.org provides information across agencies on the Nebraska child welfare system, the juvenile justice system, K-12 education, postsecondary education, employment and more.

The Nebraska Supreme Court, the Nebraska Department of Education and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services lead the collaborative project that involved a number of groups to create a common understanding and an awareness of the resources available to help children and youth from birth through age 21 years.

“The systems created to help children in out-of-home care are vast in themselves and multifaceted, as they must be. Providing a single source of information from across government will enhance communications. Our students will benefit. I applaud the collaboration that has occurred on behalf of Nebraska children,” said Nebraska Education Commissioner Roger Breed. “Building a stronger community of advocates will better ensure that our at-risk children have a brighter future.”

“The value of this Web site is that it attempts to provide consistent, up-to-date information about state-related programs and services for children in out-of-home placement, along with information on the differing roles and responsibilities for each entity involved,” said Chief Justice Mike Heavican. “It is essential that the court and probation systems interact efficiently with the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services to provide proper care and direction for these children.

This Web site is designed to further that interaction. It will be updated and maintained by all participants.”

Department of Health and Human Services Chief Executive Officer Kerry Winterer said: “We’re excited to have this new Toolkit, which can be used by everyone who touches the lives of students in out-of-home care to provide better outcomes for children and youth.”

Partnering 4 Students offers resources for individuals providing in-home care, educators, law enforcement, the courts and state agencies as well as other entities to promote a common understanding and information to enhance the advocacy for students as well as improve their academic and vocational options.

The following entities are among those that will find the tool kit of resources helpful: schools, law enforcement, County Attorneys, Guardians Ad Litem, defense attorneys, the Courts, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services and its private contractors, Court-Appointed Special Advocate Programs, Foster Care Review Boards and foster care providers, probation, parole, group homes, institutions, residential programs, and mental health and substance abuse treatment providers.

The website is available now at www.partnering4students.org